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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/072,418

02/05/2002

Minoru Kobayashi

23484-032

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7590

07/05/2006

David J. Meyer
Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP
11355 W. Olympic Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90064

EXAMINER

WU, RUTAO

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3639

DATE MAILED: 07/05/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.		Applicant(s)	
	10/072,418		KOBAYASHI, MINORU	
	Examiner		Art Unit	
	Rutao Wu		3639	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 28 March 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Status of Claims

1. In response filed March 28, 2006, the applicant amended claims 1-24, no claims have been cancelled and no new claims have been introduced.

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's arguments, see page 9, filed March 28, 2006, with respect to claims 1-24 have been fully considered and are persuasive. The U.S.C. §112 rejection of claims 1-24 has been withdrawn.

3. Applicant's arguments filed March 28, 2006, with respect to claims 5, 6 and 1-4 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

As per claims 5 and 6, the applicant argues that Shimada does not disclose "determining a base fee for the use of a vehicle when the departure port is at optimum inventory/determining a base fee for the use of a vehicle when the destination port is at optimum inventory." Shimada et al (U.S. Pat No. 6,125,306, hereafter Shimada) disclose forwarding pallets between a plurality of distribution bases where pallets are in excess and a plurality of distribution bases where pallets are in shortage at minimum cost. (col 3: lines 29-33) As stated in the previous office action, and not contested by the applicant, the pallets here are nothing more than vehicles since it is shown that pallets are transport containers in a wide area distribution (col 1: lines 36-37) Also an optimum inventory of pallets must be known in advance to be able to determine that a

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particular distribution base has excess pallets and a particular distribution base has a shortage of pallets. The minimum cost is the base cost because they are both the lowest cost paid for moving the vehicle from a departure location to a destination location. Therefore, Shimada teaches "determining a base fee for the use of a vehicle when the departure port is at optimum inventory/determining a base fee for the use of a vehicle when the destination port is at optimum inventory.

In response to applicant's argument that the references fail to show certain features of applicant's invention, it is noted that the features upon which applicant relies (i.e., how the base fee is determined) are not recited in the rejected claim(s). Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

The applicant submits that the "base fee" is determined based on a user request to relocate between any departure port and any destination port, varying dynamically based on optimum inventory. (Applicant specification p.7 ¶1-3) and the "base fee" can be calculated using a "user demand method" and/or a "parking capacity method" (*id*). However, none of the disclosed features are found in the claims, therefore no patentable weight has been given to the disclosures and the applicant's arguments are deemed not persuasive.

Therefore, claims 5 and 6 stand rejected as being unpatentable over Shimada, accordingly, claims 19-21 and 22-24 depend from claims 5 and 6 and are rejected for the same reasons.

As per claims 1-4, the applicant argues that Shimada does not disclose “determining a base fee for the use of a vehicle when the departure port is at optimum inventory/determining a base fee for the use of a vehicle when the destination port is at optimum inventory.” Shimada disclose forwarding pallets between a plurality of distribution bases where pallets are in excess and a plurality of distribution bases where pallets are in shortage at minimum cost. (col 3: lines 29-33) As stated in the previous office action, and not contested by the applicant, the pallets here are nothing more than vehicles since it is shown that pallets are transport containers in a wide area distribution (col 1: lines 36-37) Also an optimum inventory of pallets must be known in advance to be able to determine that a particular distribution base has excess pallets and a particular distribution base has a shortage of pallets. The minimum cost is the base cost because they are both the lowest cost paid for moving the vehicle from a departure location to a destination location. Therefore, Shimada teaches “determining a base fee for the use of a vehicle when the departure port is at optimum inventory/determining a base fee for the use of a vehicle when the destination port is at optimum inventory.

In response to applicant's argument that the references fail to show certain features of applicant's invention, it is noted that the features upon which applicant relies (i.e., how the base fee is determined) are not recited in the rejected claim(s). Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

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The applicant submits that the “base fee” is determined based on a user request to relocate between any departure port and any destination port, varying dynamically based on optimum inventory. (Applicant specification p.7 ¶1-3) and the “base fee” can be calculated using a “user demand method” and/or a “parking capacity method” (*id*). However, none of the disclosed features are found in the claims, therefore no patentable weight has been given to the disclosures and the applicant’s arguments are deemed not persuasive.

Therefore, claims 1-4 stand rejected as being unpatentable over Shimada, accordingly, claims 7-18 depend from claims 1-4 and are rejected for the same reasons.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. Claims 5, 6, 21 and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Shimada et al (US 6,125,306).

As per claims 5, 24, Shimada et al discloses:

determining the optimum vehicle inventory at each departure pod, (col. 11, lines 22-27, determining the value of pallets expected to depart at that distribution base by adding the values at the place of departure of the transport schedule table, w/ col. 1, lines 36-37, in this case, since the values at the place of departure are added, the result

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is an optimum result, and also, the pallets are nothing more than vehicles since it is shown that pallets are transport containers in a wide area distribution in col. 1 , lines 36-37)

Determining a base fee for the use of a vehicle when the departure port is at optimum inventory/determining the fee for use of a vehicle... , (Col. 12, lines 22-28, shows optimum pallets to minimize forwarding costs based on the results of the pallet supply and demand prediction, in this case, the costs are minimized to a level according to a specific set of results and therefore represents a base fee);

Displaying the base fee when the number of vehicles at the departure port is at optimum inventory/displaying the fee derived... , (Col. 12, lines 28-37, results including optimized pallets at a minimized cost) is displayed).

As per claims 6, 21, Shimada et al discloses:

Determining the optimum vehicle inventory at each destination port, (Col. 12, lines 22-28, shows optimum pallets to minimize forwarding costs based on the results of the pallet supply and demand prediction, in this case, the costs are minimized to a level according to a specific set of results and therefore represents a base fee. Also shows that the number of pallets have an inverse relationship with the forwarding costs); and

Determining a base fee for the use of a vehicle when the destination port is at optimum inventory/determining the fee for the use of a vehicle, (Col. 12, lines 22-28, shows optimum pallets to minimize forwarding costs based on the results of the pallet supply and demand prediction, in this case, the costs are minimized to a level according a specific set of results and therefore represents a base fee);

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Displaying the base fee when the number of vehicles at the destination port is at optimum inventory/displaying the fee derived...when the number of vehicles at a destination port is at optimum inventory/displaying the fee derived...when the number of vehicles at a destination port is at optimum inventory, (Col. 12, lines 28-37, results [including optimized pallets at a minimized cost] is displayed).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 1-4, 7-20, 22 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shimada et al (US 6,125,306).

As per claims 1, 13, 16, 22, Shimada et al discloses:

Determining the optimum vehicle inventory at each departure port, (Col. 1, lines 22-27, determining the value of pallets expected to depart at that distribution base by adding the values at the place of departure of the transport schedule table, w/col. 1, lines 36-37, in this case, since the values at the place of departure are added, the result is an optimum result, and also pallets are nothing more than vehicles since it is shown that pallets are transport containers in a wide area distribution in col. 1, lines 36-37);

Determining a base fee for the use of a vehicle when the departure port is at optimum inventory/determining the fee for the use of a vehicle; and, (Col. 12, lines 22-

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28, shows optimum pallets to minimize forwarding costs based on the results of the pallet supply and demand prediction, in this case the costs are minimized to a level according to a specific set of results and therefore represents a base fee. Also shows that the number of pallets have an inverse relationship with the forwarding costs).

Displaying a fee..., (Col 12, lines 28-37, results [including optimized pallets at a minimized cost] is displayed, where the inverse relationship as discussed above is implemented into the results).

Shimada et al does not specifically disclose displaying a fee below the base when the number of vehicles at the departure port is above the optimum inventory, however, does disclose an inverse relationship concerning the number of pallets verses the forwarding costs as shown in col 12, lines 22-24, therefore, when the optimum inventory is increases, the fee is therefore decreased.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to display a fee below the base when the number of vehicles at the departure port is above the optimum inventory with the motivation of displaying the fee below a base level for the optimum inventory available.

As per claims 2, 14, 17, 23, Shimada et al discloses:

Determining the optimum vehicle inventory at each departure port, (Col.. 1, lines 22-27, determining the value of pallets expected to depart at that distribution base by adding the values at the place of departure of the transport schedule table, w/col. 1, lines 36-37, in this case, since the values at the place of departure are added, the result

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is an optimum result, and also pallets are nothing more than vehicles since it is shown that pallets are transport containers in a wide area distribution in col. 1, lines 36-37);

Determining a base fee for the use of a vehicle when the departure port is at optimum inventory/determining the fee for the use of a vehicle; (Col. 12, lines 22-28, shows optimum pallets to minimize forwarding costs based on the results of the pallet supply and demand prediction, in this case the costs are minimized to a level according to a specific set of results and therefore represents a base fee. Also shows that the number of pallets have an inverse relationship with the forwarding costs); and

Displaying a fee..., (Col 12, lines 28-37, results [including optimized pallets at a minimized cost] is displayed, where the inverse relationship as discussed above is implemented into the results).

Shimada et al does not specifically disclose displaying a fee above the base fee/above the fee derived... when the number of vehicles at a departure port is below the optimum inventory, however, does disclose an inverse relationship concerning the number of pallets verses the forwarding costs as shown in col. 12, lines 22-24, therefore, when the optimum inventory is decreased, the fee is therefore increased.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to display a fee above the base when the number of vehicles at the departure port is below the optimum inventory with the motivation of displaying the fee that is above a base level for the optimum inventory available.

As per claims 3, 7, 10, 19, Shimada et al discloses:

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Determining the optimum vehicle inventory at each destination port, (Col. 11, lines 16-22, shows that quantities of loaded pallets same as value at the place of arrival are added, taking this added information and further obtaining the predicted quantity of pallets expected to arrive, in this case, since the values at the place of destination are added, the result is an optimum result, and also pallets are nothing more than vehicles since it is shown that pallets are transport containers in a wide area distribution in col. 1, lines 36-37);

Determining a base fee for the use of a vehicle when the destination port is at optimum inventory, (Col. 12, lines 22-28, shows optimum pallets to minimize forwarding costs based on the results of the pallet supply and demand prediction, in this case the costs are minimized to a level according to a specific set of results and therefore represents a base fee. Also shows that the number of pallets have an inverse relationship with the forwarding costs); and

Displaying a fee..., (Col 12, lines 28-37, results [including optimized pallets at a minimized cost] is displayed, where the inverse relationship as discussed above is implemented into the results).

Shimada et al does not specifically disclose displaying a fee above the base fee when the number of vehicles at a destination port is above the optimum inventory, however, does disclose forwarding pallets in the order from a base with lower costs to a base with higher costs among bases where pallets are in excess compared with the physical distribution base where pallets are in shortage, in col. 21, line 64-col 22, line 2,

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which represents a directly proportional relationship since the amount of bases that are in excess are gradually being transported to bases with higher costs).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to display a fee above the base when the number of vehicles at the destination port is above the optimum inventory with the motivation of displaying the fee that directly corresponds to the optimum inventory available.

As per claims 4, 8, 11, 20, Shimada et al discloses:

Determining the optimum vehicle inventory at each destination port, (Col. 11, lines 16-22, shows that quantities of loaded pallets same as value at the place of arrival are added, taking this added information and further obtaining the predicted quantity of pallets expected to arrive, in this case, since the values at the place of destination are added, the result is an optimum result, and also pallets are nothing more than vehicles since it is shown that pallets are transport containers in a wide area distribution in col. 1, lines 36-37);

Determining a base fee for the use of a vehicle when the destination port is at optimum inventory/determining the fee for the use of a vehicle, (Col. 12, lines 22-28, shows optimum pallets to minimize forwarding costs based on the results of the pallet supply and demand prediction, in this case the costs are minimized to a level according to a specific set of results and therefore represents a base fee. Also shows that the number of pallets have an inverse relationship with the forwarding costs); and

Displaying a fee..., (Col 12, lines 28-37, results [including optimized pallets at a minimized cost] is displayed, where the inverse relationship as discussed above is implemented into the results).

Shimada et al does not specifically disclose displaying a fee below the base fee/below the fee derived when the number of vehicles at a destination port is below the optimum inventory, however, does disclose forwarding pallets in the order from a base with lower costs to a base with higher costs among bases where pallets are in excess compared with the physical distribution base where pallets are in shortage, in col. 21, line 64-col 22, line 2, which represents a directly proportional relationship since the amount of bases that are in excess are gradually being transported to bases with higher costs, therefore, if the pallets are at a shortage, it would be obvious to forward pallets in the order from a base with higher costs to a base with lower costs).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to display a fee below the base when the number of vehicles at the destination port is below the optimum inventory with the motivation of displaying the fee that directly corresponds to the optimum inventory available.

As per claims 9, 12, Shimada et al discloses:

Determining the optimum vehicle inventory at each destination port, (Col. 12, lines 22-28, shows optimum pallets to minimize forwarding costs based on the results of the pallet supply and demand prediction, in this case, the costs are minimized to a level according to a specific set of results and therefore represents a base fee. Also shows that the number of pallets have an inverse relationship with the forwarding costs); and

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Determining the fee for the use of a vehicle, (Col. 12, lines 22-28, shows optimum pallets to minimize forwarding costs based on the results of the pallet supply and demand prediction, in this case the costs are minimized to a level according to a specific set of results and therefore represents a base fee);

Displaying a fee derived...when the number of vehicles at a destination port is at optimum inventory/displaying the fee derived...when the number of vehicles at a destination port is at optimum inventory, (Col 12, lines 28-37, results [including optimized pallets at a minimized cost] is displayed).

As per claims 15, 18, Shimada et al discloses:

Determining the optimum vehicle inventory at each departure port, (Col.. 11, lines 22-27, determining the value of pallets expected to depart at that distribution base by adding the values at the place of departure of the transport schedule table, w/col. 1, lines 36-37, in this case, since the values at the place of departure are added, the result is an optimum result, and also, the pallets are nothing more than vehicles since it is shown that pallets are transport containers in a wide area distribution in col. 1, lines 36-37);

Determining the fee for the use of a vehicle, (Col. 12, lines 22-28, shows optimum pallets to minimize forwarding costs based on the results of the pallet supply and demand prediction, in this case the costs are minimized to a level according to a specific set of results and therefore represents a base fee);

Displaying a fee derived...when the number of vehicles at a departure port is at optimum inventory, (Col 12, lines 28-37, results [including optimized pallets at a minimized cost] is displayed).

Conclusion

8. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

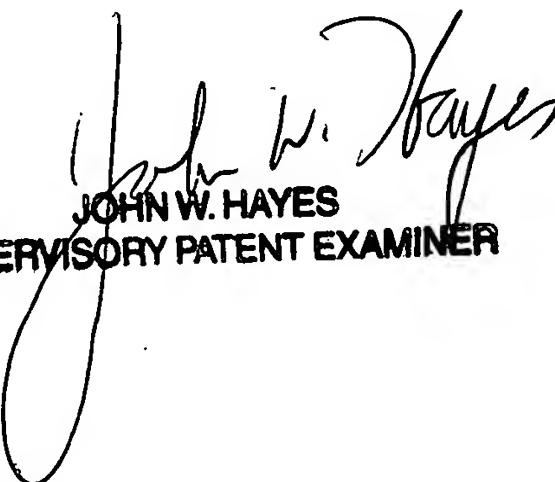
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Rutao Wu whose telephone number is (571)272-3136. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri 8-5.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Hayes can be reached on (571)272-6708. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

rw


JOHN W. HAYES
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER